

MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Tuesday, October 11, 2005 3:42 p.m. Room 307 House Office Building, Lansing

Representative Nitz, Chair, called the meeting to order.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Representatives Nitz, Ball, Newell, Casperson, Stahl, Proos, Hune, Mayes, Spade, Kathleen Law, Sheltrown. (11/11)

Representative Proos made a motion to adopt the minutes of the meeting of September 27, 2005, supported by Representative Spade. No objections being offered, a unanimous ballot was cast to accept the minutes as presented.

Jackie Leshkevich of the Legislative Service Bureau (LSB) Research Division provided a presentation on methane digesters. The topics covered included common types of digesters, manure treatment and energy production, and health and environmental concerns associated with manure.

Dr. William Bickert of Michigan State University (MSU) spoke to the Committee regarding an integrated manure management system, manure management on the farm, viewing manure as a resource, connections to biomass, biomass as a renewable energy source, and biomass conversion technologies.

MSU graduate student Dana Kirk also spoke to the Committee regarding the benefits of anaerobic digestion, systems operating in the United States and Germany, digester products, biogas uses, electricity produced from biogas, and advanced treatment.

Dr. Imad Mahawili, of Grand Valley State University provided a presentation on the Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center (MAREC). MAREC is an advanced biodigester plant. Topics discussed included the advantages of biodigesters, a 500 dairy plant concept, a review of the operations of Entec, and a digester plant in Austria.

Velmer Green of Green Meadows Farms in Elsie, Michigan, spoke in support of HB 5033 and discussed the development of a methane digester on his farm in conjunction with MSU.

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Discussions and questions followed each presentation.

Chair Nitz stated that action on HB 5033 will occur at a future meeting of the Committee.

There being no additional business before the Committee, Chair Nitz declared the meeting adjourned, the time being 5:40 p.m.

Representative Neal Nitz, Chair

Catherine Petroskey, Committee Clerk
(517) 373-8538